

### **Galileo's First Deposition (12 April 1633)**

Summoned, there appeared personally in Rome at the palace of the Holy Office, in the usual quarters of the Reverend Father Commissary, fully in the presence of the Reverend Father Fra Vincenzo Maculano of Firenzuola, Commissary General, and of his assistant Reverend Father Carlo Sinceri, Prosecutor of the Holy Office, etc.

Galileo, son of the late Vincenzo Galilei, Florentine, seventy years old, who, having taken a formal oath to tell the truth, was asked by the Fathers the following:

**Q:** By what means and how long ago did he come to Rome.

**A:** I arrived in Rome the first Sunday of Lent, and I came in a litter.

**Q:** Whether he came of his own accord, or was called, or was ordered by someone to come to Rome, and by whom.

**A:** In Florence the Father Inquisitor ordered me to come to Rome and present myself to the Holy Office, this being an injunction by the officials of the Holy Office.

**Q.** Whether he knows or can guess the reason why he was ordered to Rome.

**A.** I imagine that the reason why I have been ordered to present myself to the Holy Office in Rome is to account for my recently printed book. I imagine this because of the injunction to the printer and myself, a few days before I was ordered to come to Rome; not to issue anymore of these book; and similarly because the printer was by the Father Inquisitor to send the original manuscript of my book to the Holy Office in Rome.

**Q:** That he explain the character of the book on account of which he thinks he was ordered to come to Rome.

**A:** It is a book written in dialogue form, and it treats of the constitution of the world, that is, of the two chief systems, and the arrangement of the heavens and the elements.

**Q:** Whether, if he were shown the said book, he is prepared to identify it as his.

**A:** I hope so; I hope that if the book is shown me I shall recognize it. And having been shown one of the books printed in Florence in 1632, whose title is Dialogue of Galileo Galilei Lincean etc., which examines the two systems of the world, and having looked at it and inspected it carefully, he said: I know this book very well; it is one of those printed in Florence; and I acknowledge it as mine and written by me.

**Q:** Whether he likewise acknowledges each and every thing contained in the said book as his.

**A:** I know this book shown to me, for it is one of those printed in Florence; and acknowledge all it contains as having been written by me.

**Q:** When and where he composed the said book, and how long it took him.

**A:** In regard to the place, I composed it in Florence, beginning ten or twelve years ago; and it must have taken me seven or eight years, but not continuously.

**Q:** Whether he was in Rome other times, especially in the year 1616, and for what occasion.

**A:** I was in Rome in the year 1616; then I was here in the second year of His Holiness Urban VIII's pontificate; and lastly I was here three years ago, the occasion being that I wanted to have my book printed. The occasion for my being in Rome in the year 1616 was that, having heard objections to Nicolaus Copernicus's opinion on the earth's motion, the sun's stability, and the arrangement of the heavenly spheres, in order to be sure of holding only holy and Catholic opinions, I came to hear what was proper to hold in regard to this topic.

**Q:** Whether he came of his own accord or was summoned, what the reason was why he was summoned, and with which person or persons he discussed the above-mentioned topics.

**A:** In 1616 I came to Rome of my own accord, without being summoned, for the reason I mentioned. In Rome I discussed this matter with some cardinals who oversaw the Holy Office at that time, especially with Cardinals Bellarmine, Aracoeli, San Eusebio, Bonsi, and d' Ascoli.

**Q:** What specifically he discussed with the above-mentioned cardinals.

**A:** The occasion for discussing with the said cardinals was that they wanted to be informed about Copernicus's doctrine, his book being very difficult to understand for those who are not professional mathematicians and astronomers. In particular they wanted to understand the arrangement of the heavenly spheres according to Copernicus's hypothesis, how he places the sun at the center of the planets' orbits, how around the sun he places next the orbit of Mercury, around the latter that of Venus, then the moon around the earth, and around this Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; and in regard to motion, he makes the sun stationary at the center and the earth turn on itself and around the sun, that is, on itself with the diurnal motion and around the sun with the annual motion.

**Q:** Since, as he says, he came to Rome to be able to have the resolution and the truth regarding the above, what then was decided about this matter.

**A:** Regarding the controversy which centered on the above-mentioned opinion of the

sun's stability and earth's motion, it was decided by the Holy Congregation of the Index that this opinion, taken absolutely, is repugnant to Holy Scripture and is to be admitted only suppositionally, in the way that Copernicus takes it.

**Q:** Whether he was then notified of the said decision, and by whom.

**A:** I was indeed notified of the said decision of the Congregation of the Index, and I was notified by Lord Cardinal Bellarmine.

**Q:** What the Most Eminent Bellarmine told him about the said decision, whether he said anything else about the matter, and if so what.

**A:** Lord Cardinal Bellarmine told me that Copernicus's opinion could be held suppositionally, as Copernicus himself had held it. His Eminence knew that I held it suppositionally, namely in the way that Copernicus held it, as you can see from an answer by the same Lord Cardinal to a letter of Father Master Paolo Antonio Foscarini, Provincial of the Carmelites; I have a copy of this, and in it one finds these words: "I say that it seems to me that Your Paternity and Mr. Galileo are proceeding prudently by limiting yourselves to speaking suppositionally and not absolutely." This letter by the said Lord Cardinal is dated 12 April 1615. Moreover, he told me that otherwise, namely taken absolutely, the opinion could be neither held nor defended.

**Q:** What was decided and then made known to him precisely in the month of February 1616.

**A:** In the month of February 1616, Lord Cardinal Bellarmine told me that since Copernicus's opinion, taken absolutely, was contrary to Holy Scripture, it could be neither held nor defended, but it could be taken and used suppositionally. In conformity with this I keep a certificate by Lord Cardinal Bellarmine himself, dated 26 May 1616, in which he says that Copernicus's opinion cannot be held or defended, being against Holy Scripture. I present a copy of this certificate, and here it is.

And he showed a sheet of paper with twelve lines of writing on one side only, beginning "We, Robert Cardinal Bellarmine, have" and ending "on this 26th day of May 1616," signed "The same mentioned above, Robert Cardinal Bellarmine." This evidence was accepted and marked with the letter B. Then he added: I have the original of this certificate with me in Rome, and it is written all in the hand of the above-mentioned Lord Cardinal Bellarmine.

**Q:** Whether, when he was notified of the above-mentioned matters, there were others present, and who they were.

**A:** When Lord Cardinal Bellarmine notified me of what I mentioned regarding Copernicus's opinion, there were some Dominican Fathers present, but I did not know them nor have I seen them since.

**Q:** Whether at that time, in the presence of those Fathers, he was given any injunction either by them or by someone else concerning the same matter, and if so what.

**A:** As I remember it, the affair took place in the following manner. One morning Lord Cardinal Bellarmine sent for me, and he told me a certain detail that I should like to speak to the ear of His Holiness before telling others; but then at the end he told me that Copernicus's opinion could not be held or defended, being contrary to Holy Scripture. I do not recall whether those Dominican Fathers were there at first or came afterward; nor do I recall whether they were present when the Lord Cardinal told me that the said opinion could not be held. Finally, it may be that I was given an injunction not to hold or defend the said opinion, but I do not recall it since this is something of many years ago.

**Q:** Whether, if one were to read to him what he was then told and ordered with injunction, he would remember that.

**A:** I do not recall that I was told anything else, nor can I know whether I shall remember what was then told me, even if it is read to me. I am saying freely what I recall because I do not claim not to have in any way violated that injunction, that is, not to have held or defended at all the said opinion of the earth's motion and sun's stability.

**Q:** And having been told that the said injunction, given to him then in the presence of witnesses, states that he cannot in any way whatever hold, defend, or teach the said opinion, he was asked whether he remembers how and by whom he was so ordered.

**A:** I do not recall that this injunction was given me any other way than orally by Lord Cardinal Bellarmine. I do remember that the injunction was that I could not hold or defend, and maybe even that I could not teach. I do not recall, further, that there was the phrase in any way whatever, but maybe there was; in fact, I did not think about it or keep it in mind, having received a few months thereafter Lord Cardinal Bellarmine's certificate dated 26 May which I have presented and in which is explained the order given to me not to hold or defend the said opinion. Regarding the other two phrases in the said injunction now mentioned, namely not to teach and in any way whatever, I did not retain them in my memory, I think because they are not contained in the said certificate, which I relied upon and kept as a reminder.

**Q:** Whether, after the issuing of the said injunction, he obtained any permission to write the book identified by himself, which he later sent to the printer.

**A:** After the above-mentioned injunction I did not seek permission to write the above-mentioned book which I have identified, because I do not think that by writing this book I was contradicting at all the injunction given me not to hold, defend, or teach the said opinion, but rather that I was refuting it.

**Q:** Whether he obtained permission for printing the same book, by whom, and whether for himself or for someone else.

**A:** To obtain permission to print the above-mentioned book, although I was receiving profitable offers from France, Germany, and Venice, I refused them and spontaneously

came to Rome three years ago to place it into the hands of the chief censor, namely the Master of the Sacred Palace, giving him absolute authority to add, delete, and change as he saw fit. After having it examined very diligently by his associate Father Visconti, the said Master of the Sacred Palace reviewed it again himself and licensed it; that is, having approved the book, he gave me permission but ordered to have the book printed in Rome. Since, in view of the approaching summer, I wanted to go back home to avoid the danger of getting sick, having been away all of May and June, we agreed that I was to return here to autumn immediately following. While I was in Florence, the plague broke out and commerce was topped; so, seeing that I could not come to Rome, by correspondence I requested of the same Master of the Sacred Palace permission for the book to be printed in Florence. He communicated to me that he would want to review my original manuscript, and that therefore I should send it to him. Despite having used every possible care and having contacted even the highest secretaries of the Grand Duke and the directors of the postal service, to try to send the said original safely, I received no assurance that this could be done, and it certainly would have been damaged, washed out, or burned, such was the strictness at the borders. I related to the same Father Master Giacinto Stefani, a Dominican, professor of Sacred Scripture at the University of Florence, preacher for the Most Serene Highnesses, and consultant to the Holy Office. The book was handed over by me to the Father Inquisitor of Florence and by the Father Inquisitor to the above mentioned Father Giacinto Stefani; the latter returned it to the Father Inquisitor, who sent it to Mr. Niccolò dell' Antella, reviewer of books to be printed from the Most Serene Highness of Florence; the printer, named Landini, received it from this Mr. Niccolò and, having negotiated with the Father Inquisitor, printed it, observing strictly every order given by the Father Master of the Sacred Palace.

**Q:** Whether, when he asked the above-mentioned Master of the Sacred Palace for permission to print the above-mentioned book, he revealed to the same Most Reverend Father Master the injunction previously give to him concerning the directive of the Holy Congregation, mentioned above.

**A:** When I asked him for permission to print the book, I did not say anything to the Father Master of the Sacred Palace about the above-mentioned injunction because I did not judge it necessary to tell it to him, having no scruples since with the said book I had neither held not defended the opinion of the earth's motion and sun's stability; on the contrary, in the said book I show the contrary of Copernicus's opinion and show that Copernicus's reasons are invalid and inconclusive.

With this the deposition ended, and he was assigned a certain room in the dormitory of the officials, located in the Palace of the Holy Office, in lieu of prison, with the injunction not to leave it without special permission, under penalty to be decided by the Holy Congregation; and he was ordered to sign below and was sworn to silence.

I, Galileo Galilei, have testified as above.

## Galileo's Second Deposition (April 30, 1633)

Called personally to the hall of the Congregations, in the presence and with the assistance of those mentioned above and of myself, the above-mentioned Galileo Galilei, who has since then petitioned to be heard, having sworn an oath to tell the truth, was asked by the Fathers the following:

**Q:** That he state whatever he wished to say.

**A:** For several days I have been thinking continuously and directly about the interrogations I underwent on the 16th of this month and in particular about the question whether sixteen years ago I had been prohibited, by order of the Holy Office, from holding, defending, and teaching in any way whatever the opinion, then condemned, of the earth's motion and sun's stability. It dawned on me to reread my printed Dialogue, which over the last three years I had not even looked at. I wanted to check very carefully whether, against my purest intention, through my oversight, there might have fallen from my pen not only something enabling readers or superiors to infer a defect of disobedience on my part, but also other details through which one might think of me as a transgressor of the orders of Holy Church. Being at liberty, through the generous approval of superiors, to send one of my servants for errands, I managed to get a copy of my book, and I started to read it with the greatest concentration and to examine it in the most detailed manner. Not having seen it for so long, I found it almost a new book by another author. Now, I freely confess that it appeared to me in several places to be written in such a way that a reader, not aware of my intention, would have had reason to form the opinion that the arguments for the false side, which I intended to confute, were so stated as to be capable of convincing because of their strength, rather than being easy to answer. In particular, two arguments, one based on sunspots and the other on the tides, are presented favorably to the reader as being strong and powerful, more than would seem proper for someone who deemed them to be inconclusive and wanted to confute them, as indeed I inwardly and truly did and do hold them to be inconclusive and refutable. As an excuse for myself, within myself, for having fallen into an error so foreign to my intention, I was not completely satisfied with saying that when one presents arguments for the opposite side with the intention of confuting them, they must be explained in the fairest way and not be made out of straw to the disadvantage of the opponent, especially when one is writing in dialogue form. Being dissatisfied with this excuse, as I said, I resorted to that of the natural gratification everyone feels for his own subtleties and for showing himself to be cleverer than the average man, by finding ingenious and apparent considerations of probability even in favor of false propositions. Nevertheless-even though, to use Cicero's words, "I am more desirous of glory than is suitable" -if I had to write out the same arguments now, there is no doubt I would weaken them in such a way that they could not appear to exhibit a force which they really and essentially lack. My error then was, and I confess it, one of vain ambition, pure ignorance, and inadvertence. This is as much as I need to say on this occasion, and it occurred to me as I reread my book.

With this, having obtained his signature, and having sworn him to silence, the Fathers formally concluded the hearing.

I, Galileo Galilei, have testified as above.

And returning after a little, he said:

And for greater confirmation that I neither did hold nor do hold as true the condemned opinion of the earth's motion and sun's stability, if, as I desire, I am granted the possibility and the time to prove it more clearly, I am ready to do so. The occasion for it is readily available since in the book already published the speakers agree that after a certain time they should meet again to discuss various physical problems other than the subject already dealt with. Hence, with this pretext to add one or two other Days, I promise to reconsider the arguments already presented in favor of the said false and condemned opinion and to confute them in the most effective way that the blessed God will enable me. So I beg this Holy Tribunal to cooperate with me in this good resolution, by granting me the permission to put it into practice.

And again he signed.

I, Galileo Galilei, affirm the above.

### **Galileo's Third Deposition (May 10, 1633)**

Summoned, there appeared personally at the hall of Congregations of the palace of the Holy Office in Rome, in the presence of the very Reverend Father Fra Vincenzo Maculano, O.P., Commissary General of the Holy Office, etc.

Galileo Galilei mentioned above; and, called before his Paternity, the same Father Commissary gave him a deadline of eight days to present his defense, if he wanted and intended to do it.

Having heard this, he said:

I understand what Your Paternity has told me. In reply I say that I do want to present something in my defense, namely in order to show the sincerity and purity of my intention, not at all to excuse my having transgressed in some ways, as I have already said. I present the following statement, together with a certificate by the late Most Eminent Lord Cardinal Bellarmine, written with his own hand by the Lord Cardinal himself, of which I earlier presented a copy by my hand. For the rest I rely in every way on the usual mercy and clemency of this Tribunal.

After signing his name, he was sent back to the house of the abovementioned Ambassador of the Most Serene Grand Duke, under the conditions already communicated to him.

I, Galileo Galilei, with my own hand.

### **Galileo's Fourth Deposition (June 21, 1633)**

Called personally to the hall of Congregations in the palace of the Holy Office in Rome, fully in the presence of the Reverend Father Commissary General of the Holy Office, assisted by the Reverend Father Prosecutor, etc.

Galileo Galilei, Florentine, mentioned previously, having sworn an oath to tell the truth, was asked by the Fathers the following:

**Q:** Whether he had anything to say.

**A:** I have nothing to say.

**Q:** Whether he holds or has held, and for how long, that the sun is the center of the world and the earth is not the center of the world but moves also with diurnal motion.

**A:** A long time ago, that is, before the decision of the Holy Congregation of the Index, and before I was issued that injunction, I was undecided and regarded the two opinions, those of Ptolemy and Copernicus, as disputable, because either the one or the other could be true in nature. But after the above-mentioned decision, assured by the prudence of the authorities, all my uncertainty stopped, and I held, as I still hold, as very true and undoubted Ptolemy's opinion, namely the stability of the earth and the motion of the sun.

**Q:** Having been told that he is presumed to have held the said opinion after that time, from the manner and procedure in which the said opinion is discussed and defended in the book he published after that time, indeed from the very fact that he wrote and published the said book, therefore he was asked to freely tell the truth whether he holds or has held that opinion.

**A:** In regard to my writing of the Dialogue already published, I did not do so because I held Copernicus's opinion to be true. Instead, deeming only to be doing a beneficial service, I explained the physical and astronomical reasons that can be advanced for one side and for the other; I tried to show that none of these, neither those in favor of this opinion or that, had the strength of a conclusive proof and that therefore to proceed with certainty one had to resort to the determination of more subtle doctrines, as one can see in many places in the Dialogue. So for my part I conclude that I do not hold and, after the determination of the authorities, I have not held the condemned opinion.

**Q:** Having been told that from the book itself and the reasons advanced for the affirmative side, namely that the earth moves and the sun is motionless, he is presumed, as it was stated, that he holds Copernicus's opinion, or at least that he held it at the time, therefore he was told that unless he decided to proffer the truth, one would have recourse to the remedies of the law and to appropriate steps against him.

**A:** I do not hold this opinion of Copernicus, and I have not held it after being ordered by injunction to abandon it. For the rest, here I am in your hands; do as you please.

**Q:** And he was told to tell the truth; otherwise one would have recourse to torture.

**A:** I am here to obey, but I have not held this opinion after the determination was made, as I said.

And since nothing else could be done for the execution of the decision, after he signed he was sent to his place.

I, Galileo Galilei, have testified as above.